



a whispered word, hasten into safety. She had taken the lamp from my hand and had quenched its flame; but just overhead there was a gas lamp which poured down a flickering glare into the recess where we stood. I could see the girl's face agitated, and tears soon began to rise in her soft eyes. As yet I had spoken no words of thanks to her as my ally, but now, though I had perished for it, I could not resist the impulse to take her hand in mine and raise it reverently to my lips. She did not resist; but her hand trembled like a leaf, and she withdrew it, and, with a look of anxious terror in her face, whispered, "Go, Go at once. You are in great danger till you are out of this house. Make haste. Make haste, for perhaps they will miss her and come to search."

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turned and received the same reply from the waiter. The old gentleman had not been to the safe again.

Then I felt sure that my rescue had been discovered, and that the confederates had not taken alarm; perhaps were even now out of England. I had an indescribable aversion to place the matter in the hands of the police, and I resolved at least to discover by the process of exhaustion the position of Mr. Bellamy's residence. I thought a large scale map of London, and explored every alley and court lying within the bounds of the district which I felt sure must contain the house I was seeking. At last after spending a dozen evenings in tramping through the mire and gloom of the world's streets, I found myself in a court which I recognized at once. I hurried on, and there surely enough was the triangular space at the end, and there too, was the very house, with the handsome semi-circular light over the door, with all its shutters closed, and a handbell in one window announcing that it was "To Let."



"I COULD NOT RESIST THE IMPULSE TO TAKE HER HAND IN MINE."

I took a survey of the neighboring houses. They were all of a greatly inferior type, with brass plates of different dimensions dotted about the doors, and multitudes of bell-handles on every door-post. Seeing an old woman pottering about the threshold of one of them, I went up to her and asked her how long the house opposite had been vacant.

"Oh, sure, sir," she replied, "it's just a fortnight, or maybe three weeks since the lame old gentleman, God bless him! went away one mornin', and nobody has set eyes on him since. And three days after a broker's cart came and took away all the sticks of furniture."

"And the young lady and the dark gentleman are they all gone as well?"

"I never see no dark gentleman," but there was a slip of a collie with the odd man who went out every day. Ah, sir, it's many a squire he has given to me and to other time to look at in his flight from my pursuers whom I figured as following him."

"Do you know the name of the broker who took away the furniture, or the landlord to whom the house belongs?"

"Sorra a bit. Brokers and landlords are mighty hard on poor folk like me. Ah! the swart old gentleman, with his white hair and poor crippled legs. I'll never have another bit of silver from him, were I rich, but maybe he'll be seen him some day, and as ye do, tell him that poor old Betty's cough is as bad as ever, and that she's powerful bad of the liver."

I cut the old woman's story short by giving her the shilling, and probably I was at once elevated in her estimation to a moral level with Mr. Bellamy. I took the number of the house and ascertained from the rating authorities the landlord's name; but here I was brought to a dead standstill. The landlord knew nothing more of Mr. Bellamy than that he took the house three years ago, and had always paid his rent in advance. He was a very loose sort of an admirable tenant, and would be much obliged to me if I could find him another as good.

I went to a private inquiry office and put the affair into the hands of an agent. He traced the goods which had been taken from the house to the store of a certain furniture broker; but that was not the same thing as tracing Nathalie. A further clue was lost; and the agent, like an honest man, told me that I should be throwing away to no purpose any more money I might spend in the case. Still I did not lose heart nor relax my investigations. I gave up my Canterbury bellings, so that I might spend all my evenings in groping about the foreign quarter of London, in the hope of meeting either Mr. Bellamy or Dr. Fabricius; for I was persuaded that they had not moved far when they left the late habitation.

One day, under the heading of "Liverpool," I read the following paragraph in the newspaper: "On Friday last, just as the steamship Black Swan was preparing to leave for New York, the police arrested two men who were amongst the passengers, on the charge of counterfeiting and putting in circulation false Bank of England notes. The prisoners, an Englishman named Lucas, and a Maltese, who was known to possess at least a dozen shillings, were taken before the magistrate, and, on the evidence then produced, were committed to take their trial at the forthcoming Assizes."

In a moment I knew that my land was in the hands of the police, and to the date of the arrest, and on the day before the commission opened, I started for Liverpool.

I had no need of plan of operations in my head. The first step I took was to go to the office of the brokers of the steamship Black Swan, to try and ascertain whether any other ticket had been taken besides those of the two men.

"Yes," the clerk informed me. "Three season tickets were taken at the same time under the names of Mr. and Mrs. Lucas and Mr. Melius; none of these passengers was of the Black Swan; but, by the rules of the company, their ticket would be available by the next boat."

The trial of the two forgers came on for hearing the next day of the assize. I was early at the door, and secured a place in the front row of the public gallery. As I sat in the dingy court, watching the officials mak-

ing their final dispositions, and the harried and solicited clerks bringing in their bags and sheaves of documents, doubts began to assail me. The men I was seeking were not the only bank note forgers in England; and, strong as was the circumstantial evidence furnished by their nationality and the presence of a daughter in their projected trip across the Atlantic, I might well be mistaken.

I had almost discounted my failure, and was beginning to make my plans for a fresh start, when the movement in court and the entrance of the sheriff told me that my period of suspense was near its end. The prisoner in the first case pleaded guilty; the second was the one in which I was interested.

I do not know whether to call myself a coward or not. I suppose I must have a craven dread somewhere in my veins, for I most certainly felt a thrill of terror as the officer called out the names of Henry Lucas and Paul Melius. I fancy it must have arisen from the thought of a conviction rather than physical fear—from the thought that I was about to be close to, and look into the face of the men who, a few weeks ago, had devoted me to a slow and torturing death—to see and be seen of them. The officer's voice had scarcely ceased when the first of the prisoners stepped into the dock, and I recognized in a moment the dark and sinister countenance of Fabricius.

His appearance was scarcely changed at all; but Bellamy's long hair and beard were shorn, and with his shaven chin and clipped mustache he looked as fierce and restless as a hunted wolf. No one would have recognized in him the calm and benevolent aspect of the Ciceronian eagle. I kept my eyes fixed steadily on his face; but he did not recognize me till the counsel for the prosecution had almost finished his speech. Then I noticed that he started violently, and a few minutes after he pointed me out to his solicitor who was seated just below the dock.

The trial was a very short one. The evidence for the crown was overwhelming, and there was a virtually no defence. As soon as the foreman pronounced the word "guilty," I made my way out of court; but immediately I found I was stopped by a man, apparently a messenger, who asked me to call on a matter of urgent business that same evening at an address he gave to me.

I at once associated the message with the communication I had seen pass between Bellamy and his solicitor, and resolved to call at the address given; but I had another matter to attend to first.

I asked the policeman on duty in the entrance-hall whether the friends of prisoners just convicted would be allowed admission to the jail.

"After five o'clock you can have your name with the head turnkey, and let him know who it is you wish to see."

"And it is absolutely necessary for everybody to go to the head turnkey?" I asked.

"I don't know no other way myself," said the policeman snappishly; "and you'll be very clever if you can find one," and he turned away to answer some other interrogations.

I had learnt all I wanted to know. At half-past four I took up my station opposite the great gates of the prison to watch for some one who I felt sure would come. A romance might have written a volume of stories about the imaginary errands of the melancholy crew that passed me on their way to take a farewell to their unfortunate who the law had at last gathered into its avenging grasp. First came a little girl, an old woman, a man, a woman, and a man, and I was beginning to doubt, but the last stroke had scarcely sounded when a slender figure, clad in black from head to foot, passed through the circle of light that fell from the lamp over the prison door.

Though the face was veiled I knew at once that it was Nathalie. I drew behind the angle of the house in front of which I was standing as she approached the door of the jail. It opened and closed behind her, and in spite of the rather suspicious look of observation till she could disappear.

The moments crept slowly on. Six o'clock struck upon the chime of bell above, and I had already marked the exit of all those I had watched enter some time. At last the heavy door swung back once more. The slim figure glided forth and walked rapidly away, but before she had gone twenty yards I was beside her.

"Nathalie! Nathalie!" I called. "Thank God I have found you!" she stopped at the sound of my voice, and uttered a faint cry. "You are alone in the world now, but you will never be without a friend while I live, I will owe you my life and everything."

I took her by the hands, and she began to sob violently, and was soon in a paroxysm of hysterical grief. I led her aside up a by street, and we walked along in silence broken only by her sobs, till we came to an open place, where a large space had been cleared for rebuilding. The workmen had left, and it was now all quiet, and I prevailed upon her to stand down upon a heap of planks.

"Do not be distressed. I know everything; I am your own and a stranger to all that went on in that house as one of those children playing there. Nathalie, you know how I love you. You will come with me now, Jean, and I will take you to a place of safety till I can make you my wife."

She shuddered and drew away from me as I approached her. "Ah, no," she cried, in a gasping terror. "Say no more such words as those. You are mocking me."

"Mocking you, Nathalie! I loved you the first minute I saw you, and every hour that has passed since then my love has grown stronger, till now I could not live without you."

She drew her veil aside. There were traces of tears on her face; but it was calm now and she looked steadily at me with her deep dreamy eyes. "You are good and noble, and because I was young and lonely you pitied me; but you cannot love me, the child of the man who sought to murder you."

Nathalie let us forget all that night was a hideous dream, except our farewell. You would have risked your life, I know, to save any one; but unless you cared a little for me you would not have let me speak to you as I did."

She cast down her eyes, and a crimson blush overspread her cheeks.

"Nathalie," I went on, "you shall believe me, and you shall not cast aside my love. Your parentage—your whole past, you must forget. No two people in the whole world are so fitted to come together as we are, for we are both alone. You are not more solitary than I am."

Nathalie rose and put her hand on my arm.

"You are grateful to me for the service I did you. You pity me, and perhaps you love me. If you do I thank you with all my heart; but I should be base indeed to allow you to join your life with mine, and to take for your wife the daughter of a felon. But I knew nothing about it. I thought he was working as his book as I told you. That surely, his confidence, told me I must use all my persuasion to induce you to stay, and say one less noble and unimportant than you are would have thought of me as being in the plot. You hold me guiltless of that I am sure."

"My darling, I could as soon suspect an angel from heaven; but you must put all these foolish fears. Nothing in the world could make you anything but a worthy wife for the noblest man."

She shook her head mournfully; but I could see she was powerfully moved.

"No, nothing can wash out the stain. I will love you and live you as long as I live for the ray of light you have shed over my life, but you must go your way and forget me. You are a man with a career before you, and association with one like me would only ruin your life. With a woman it is different. What is a life like mine worth? The world will be no poorer for its loss, nor have I any wish to prolong it."

"Oh, Nathalie, would like these cut me to the heart, when I know that I could make your life bright and happy if you would only let me. But you are unfeeling and excited now. Let me take you to your lodgings. I will see you again to-morrow."

She allowed me to lead her away from the place where we had been seated, and told me the street and the number where she was lodging. I left her at the door, and promised to call the next morning.

I made my way at once to the address which the messenger had given me as I was leaving the court, and found it to be a private house with a brass plate on the door, setting forth the fact that "Charles Henry, Solicitor," lived there. I rang several times in vain, but at last the door was opened by a maid of all work, who informed me that Mr. Homer was gone "up town," and that if I had business at the office I had better call in the morning.

I was very impatient to know what could be the purpose of this business, and did not relish the prospect of waiting so long. I asked the young woman whether Mr. Homer would be back that evening, or whether he had not left a letter or a message for Mr. Costello; but she was allowed to pass where by, impatiently, and repeated her formula that if I had business at the office I had better call in the morning.

I passed a restless night. What little sleep I had was marred by disturbing dreams. By nine o'clock I was at Mr. Homer's office, and as soon as that gentleman had satisfied himself as to my identity, he handed me a letter. The delivery of this, he remarked, was all the business he was commissioned to transact with me.

I broke open the envelope at once, and found that it contained several enclosures. I began with one, a letter addressed to me in full, and read as follows:

"MY DEAR MR. COSTELLO.—I don't know whether you are a student in epistolary literature; but if you are, I am sure you will admit that two correspondents never stood in stranger relation to each other than we do. When we last parted I scarcely hoped ever to address a letter to you again; but the conditions of that interview were somewhat painful, so I will have done with it at once, and pass on to the matter I want to lay before you."

"I was a little surprised when I recognized you in court, and I appreciated most thoroughly your kindness and delicacy in not volunteering to furnish the jury with any particulars as to our past dealings. You had tasted my hospitality, and you declined to appear as a witness against me. I appreciate your good feeling, Mr. Costello. I am obliged."

"You are aware that I and my friend and late medical attendant are now provided for by the state for a period of years, a period which will see me, I trust, transported to another sphere, far removed from the turmoil of the world. You may, therefore, dismiss us from your mind with what charity you will, but remember that self-preservation is the first law of nature. In another and more perfect society altruism may find its place. At present it is rather at a disadvantage."

"It is on behalf of the girl, who has ever been as a daughter to me, that I plead your case to-day. She is young, beautiful, and absolutely ignorant of the world, and what ever I may be, I am not brave enough to let her face the perils which must beset her, unaided, without making an effort to help her. She is, however, no daughter of mine. She was born at M—, in France, and there she lived with her parents till they both died suddenly when she was three years old. Her mother was a distant cousin of mine, and on her deathbed had desired that I would see after the child's welfare. I committed her to the care of some good people (Croydon, named Calver, as I was at that time engaged in strictly regular commercial pursuits in London), and when she left them I took her to live with me, and never let her know that

she was not my own daughter."

"There is a sum of money deposited in her name at the Metropolitan and Provincial Bank, and this you can use in procuring her father and giving her a start in life. I have full confidence in your integrity after what has passed between us. She is living at No. —, — street, Liverpool."

"I enclose with this the address of the people with whom she lived in Croydon, and the copies of her birth and baptismal certificates."

Deep and weighty as were the issues dealt with in this strange letter, I could not express smile at the imperturbable impudence and sang-froid of the writer. I even forgot this, however, and all other considerations, in view of the one supreme fact which the letter disclosed, that Nathalie was not, as she deemed, the child of the convicted felon, and that I might go to her triumphant with this good news in my mouth, and banish for good and all the chimera which haunted her and thrust its hateful, estranging shadow between us.

I went with all speed to Nathalie's lodgings. "A young lady, Miss Lucas, is lodging here," I said to the landlady who opened the door.

"Yes, sir, a young lady with that name on her box, was here yesterday; but she went away soon after seven this morning."

"Gone!—and did she go to the railway, or the steamboat, or where?" I cried, "and did she leave no address?"

"No, sir, she went away, and just had a man with a hand truck to take her box. I never even noticed which direction she took."

This last disappointment was a cruel blow. The old story, a few hours too late. Here I was, standing dazed and stunned, with the talisman in my hand which was to have worked my way in a moment, now futile as the scraps of waste paper which the winter wind was chasing along the ugly street, two lives wrecked and destined to bear their burdens in solitary pain. I turned away from the door crushed and hopeless, seeking nothing which I should turn my steps. Inside my way, quite purposeless, down to the docks, and as I went along I began to speculate as to the motive which would have driven Nathalie to this strange and sudden flight. Could it be that she really loved me with the whole strength of her nature, and feared that, should we meet again, her love would overpower what she held to be her duty, and lead her to do the unfeigned evil she had spoken of last night? I could think of no other. But the motive now mattered little to me. If it were as I expected, my loss was all the more cruel.

On turning a corner, my eye fell upon a shipping placard, and on it I read the words, "Black Swan, Liverpool to New York, December 30th," and under it, "Black Eagle, Liverpool to New York, January 5th." In a moment I recalled my interview with the shipping agent, and my inquiries as to the Black Swan. Now he had told me that berth taken on the first named vessel would be available by any subsequent steamer, and the day of sailing, January 5th, this very day. Could it be possible that Nathalie had resolved to put the wide Atlantic between herself and the land of her sad associations? I drew rather than ran along the wharves till I came to the one where the ship I was seeking was moored. The chains were still clanking and rattling, and the decks of the steamer were alive with sailors and dock laborers. The volumes of black smoke surging up from her funnels told me the hour of her departure was approaching. I went on board and in the hurry and bustle which prevailed was allowed to pass wherever I liked. I asked a steward whether any passengers had yet come on board, and received a hurried answer that he believed some of them had; but he hadn't had time to look after them yet.

I made my way down into the saloon, which was in semi-darkness, a long, narrow strip of space; but at the end, quite at the stern of the ship, some ports were open, and I could see the figure of a woman apparently writing. Her back was towards me, and amid the noise and tumult on the deck above I was able to steal in to her unobserved. When I was within a few yards of her she slightly turned her head, and a thrill of joy shot through me as I recognized the face of the woman I loved.

The next moment I was beside her. A few passionate, incoherent words were all that was necessary to clear away the hateful barrier which had stood between us. As she nestled unresistingly to my side, I asked her, "Nathalie dear, what is the letter you were writing?"

"It was a farewell to my father. Shall I read you what I have written?"

"No need for that now," I said, and I took the letter and tore it in shreds and cast it into the target below.

"See love, it is floating away from us, and let it take with it all memories of the gloomy past. To-day our new life begins."

A Photographic Retort. Photographers (unpleasantly) I thought you called yourself a first class retortist!

Newman—You, sir, that is my profession. The High Young Society of Mimics, is a batch, a perfect batch, sir."

"What's the matter with it?"

"Matter! Great Daguer! Why, it still looks like her!" Philadelphia Record.

The Museum. He cut his first friends when he met them. And then they were dead. They knew that he would have been long dead.

—Boston Courier.

His Confession. "Mrs. Hanson," said Billy Birvin to his landlady at the second floor table, "have you been reading that little book on Hygiene that I gave you in my room?"

"No, Mr. Birvin. What a daisy you think so?"

"There is quite a lengthy chapter in it on the theory that converting is unhealthy."—Merchant Traveler.

A shingle nail was found in a perfectly fresh egg recently by a farmer near Niles.

given round after round, of applause.—
Cincinnati Enquirer.

BRANDON:

